In The Claims:

1. (Previously Presented)   A method of conducting a video draw poker game, the poker game defining a plurality of award-winning rankings and awards associated with the rankings, the method comprising:

receiving a wager;

dealing a plurality of playing cards into a hand;

if and only if the dealt hand has one of the award-winning rankings, distinguishing winning ones of the cards that yield the award-winning ranking from other ones of the cards;

after the distinguishing step, selecting, directly or indirectly, none or more of the cards to be replaced;

replacing each of the selected cards with a respective replacement card to form a final hand;

determining a poker hand ranking of the final hand; and

providing an award when the determined poker hand ranking meets a predetermined criterion.

2. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the distinguishing step occurs in response to a player's activation of an easy hold function.

3. (Original)   The method of claim 2, wherein the player's activation of the easy hold function is accomplished by pressing an easy hold key.

4. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the distinguishing step includes labeling the winning ones of the cards as cards to be held.

5. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the distinguishing step occurs automatically without player input.

6.   (Original)   The method of claim 5, wherein the distinguishing step includes highlighting the winning ones of the cards.

7.   (Original)   The method of claim 6, wherein the highlighting step includes flashing the winning ones of the cards.

8.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of cards include at least five cards.

9.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the cards are dealt from a deck including at least 52 standard playing cards.

10.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step is performed by a player.

11.   (Original)   An apparatus for conducting a video draw poker game, the poker game defining a plurality of award-winning rankings and awards associated with the rankings, the apparatus comprising:

a value input device for receiving a wager;

a display for displaying the poker game; and

a processor operative to

deal a plurality of playing cards into a hand;

if and only if the dealt hand has one of the award-winning rankings, cause the display to distinguish winning ones of the cards that yield the award-winning ranking from other ones of the cards;

select, directly or indirectly, none or more of the cards to be replaced;

replace each of the selected cards with a respective replacement card; and

determine a poker hand ranking of the hand.

12. (Original)   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the processor causes the display to distinguish the winning ones of the cards from the other ones of the cards in response to a player's activation of an easy hold function.

13. (Original)   The apparatus of claim 12, further including an easy hold key, operable by the player, for activating the easy hold function.

14. (Original)   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the processor causes the display to label the winning ones of the cards as cards to be held to distinguish the winning ones of the cards from the other ones of the cards.

15. (Original)   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the processor causes the display to distinguish the winning ones of the cards from the other ones of the cards without player input.

16. (Original)   The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the processor causes the display to highlight the winning ones of the cards to distinguish the winning ones of the cards from the other ones of the cards.

17. (Original)   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the processor causes the display to flash the winning ones of the cards to highlight the winning ones of the cards.

18. (Original)   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the plurality of cards include at least five cards.

19. (Original)   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the cards are dealt from a deck including at least 52 standard playing cards.

20. (Original)   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the processor is operative to select none or more of the cards in response to player input.

21.   (Previously Presented)   A method of conducting a video draw poker game, the poker game defining a plurality of award-winning rankings and awards associated with the rankings, the method comprising:

    receiving a wager;

    dealing a plurality of playing cards into a hand;

    if and only if the dealt hand has one of the award-winning rankings, distinguishing winning ones of the cards that yield the award-winning ranking from other ones of the cards;

    after the distinguishing step, drawing none or more replacement cards to replace none or more of the cards in the dealt hand to form a final hand; and

    determining a poker hand ranking of the final hand; and

    providing an award when the determined poker hand ranking meets a predetermined criterion.

22.   (Original)   The method of claim 21, wherein the distinguishing step occurs automatically without player input.

23.   (Original)   The method of claim 22, wherein the distinguishing step includes flashing the winning ones of the cards.

24.   (Original)   The method of claim 21, wherein the distinguishing step occurs in response to player input.

25.   (Original)   The method of claim 24, wherein the distinguishing step includes labeling the winning ones of the cards as cards to be held.